

BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

United States Army Corps of Engineers
San Francisco Bay Model Visitor's Center
2100 Bridgeway
Sausalito, California

Tuesday, September 24, 2003

REPORTER: JAMES W. HIGGINS, CVR

GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

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FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2003

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United States Army Corps of Engineers

San Francisco Bay Model Visitor's Center

2100 Bridgeway, Sausalito, California

The meeting was convened, pursuant to

Notice, at 7:00 p.m., Mai-Liis Bartling, Acting

Superintendent, presiding.

For the Golden Gate National Recreation Area:

Alex Naar, Fire Management Officer

Carolyn Feierabend, Moderator

Wendy Poinsoot, Integrated Resources Program Manager

Paul McLaughlin, Program Manager, Natural Resources

Jordan Reeser, Field Management Specialist

Sue Fritzke, Supervising Vegetation Ecologist

Barbara Judy

Paul Scolari, Historian

Alana Donahue

Rudy Evenson, Office of Public Affairs

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P R O C E E D I N G S

7:15 P.M.

ACTING SUPERINTENDENT BARTLING: Good evening. Welcome to our scoping meeting tonight, for the Fire Management Plan, for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Our purpose tonight is to introduce you to the Fire Management Plan, what it is, why we need to do it, and get your input on the issues, and give you an opportunity to meet with our staff who have

expertise in a variety of different areas related to the Fire Management Plan.

Before we get started, I want to point out our staff and introduce you to them, so that you can ask your questions and engage in discussion with them.

We have Alex Naar, Chris Blalock, Alana Donahue, and Jordan Reeser, from our Fire Management Office.

We have, from our Natural Resources Division, Sue Fritzke and Paul McLaughlin.

From our Cultural Resources Staff, we have Barbara Judy and Paul Scolari.

Providing Public Affairs support to us, we have Rudy Evenson. We have Wendy Poinot, for environmental compliance.

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Lastly, our facilitator tonight is Carrie Feierabend, and she is going to tell you exactly how the meeting is going to proceed and take it from here.

MS. FEIERABEND: Greet. Thank you, Mai-Liis.

My name is Carrie, and I welcome you all, once again, for coming out this evening. I hope you're not regretting missing the debate, which is going on this evening. I know -- I wish we could order in dinner here, but this is debate-free of

gubernatorial issues.

We welcome you this evening. It is a small group, and it's always the group psychology to sit in the back. So, if anyone wants to move forward, there's lots of seats here. And we look forward to hearing from you tonight. This is really about sharing information about the Fire Management Plan, what is it, where is it going to go, how can you get involved. This is one of the first steps for getting involved this evening. This is to provide us your comments, your thoughts, your concerns, your issues, so that we can incorporate those into the plan and address those issues and concerns.

The way we're going to run the evening tonight, because we're sort of a small group, I think

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what we're going to do -- there's going to be a presentation by park staff on the Fire Management Plan. Then, we're going to have staff briefly describe the materials that are at each of -- we have five work stations this evening. There's some maps and we may even take a break so you can go and look at the materials. Then we will solicit your comments and your input.

I want to stress that there are many ways that you can provide feedback to us this evening. One way is by providing some verbal comments this evening.

Another way is to provide -- we have posted some markers so that you can write down some comments immediately, especially around some of the maps that are on the walls this evening. Or, if you have questions, you can put a postit and say: What is this? Who owns it? What are you going to do with it? We want to get those kinds of detailed questions, as well as big ideas, from you.

The other way is to fill in a questionnaire that we have. You can take it home with you, think about these questions. You can either leave it with us tonight, or you can take it home, write an essay on each one of the questions and mail it on in, or you visit our web site and send in comments by e-mail.

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So there are many ways that you can share your input and thoughts, not only this evening, but up until December fifth, which is the close of scoping.

So to get things started, I'd like to introduce Wendy Poinsot, who is going to run through what is a Fire Management Plan and what is the process all about.

Wendy.

WHAT IS A FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN?

WENDY POINSOT,

INTEGRATED RESOURCES PROGRAM MANAGER

MS. POINSOT: A Fire Management Plan is a requirement for all parks in the United States that have burnable vegetation. And right now, across the country, Fire Management Plans are somewhere in the process of development for every national park that does have a vegetation risk. So we are just one of many hundreds of Fire Management Plans that are moving forward.

Fire Management Plans are long-term strategies that guide the actions related to all kinds of wild fire activities in a park. And we're directed to consider all the different types of wildland fire management actions. So we are going to be discussing suppression, prescribed fire, mechanical fuel

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reduction and the after effects of fire restoration, monitoring, rehabilitation. These are all components that go into building a Fire Management Plan.

The main, our main, priority in designing a new Fire Management Plan is the protection of firefighters and the public. We are mandated to keep this always as our highest priority. Our second priority is to protect and improve park resources.

So life and property is our first priority; and, as an adjunct priority, we want to use all our actions to the degree that we can to enhance and protect park resources.

There's several reasons why each park has to have a Fire Management Plan. And, as one our staff said: We have to, but also we want to. So we have to have a Fire Management Plan. It's national fire policy. It's in several policies, developed in 1995 and 1998, that every land management entity needs to have a Fire Management Plan. So we're just -- our agency is just one of all land-management agencies putting these together across the country.

We also need to. Our current Fire Management Plan is from 1993; and, so, it's 10-years old. We have had so much information come to us in the last ten years, and we have had so much experience in

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the federal realm in dealing with fire suppression along the wildland-urban interface, that we need to bring our 1993 plan up to current standards. Our plan, when we're done with it, will have greater detail than our 1993 plan, as far as location and the importance and sensitivity of resources. We'll have clear objectives. We will also be developing guidelines, protocols and standards for implementing the fire management actions.

Our Fire Management Plan must help us achieve park objectives. This is another one of our directives from our agency head, the Director of the

National Park Service. So, for every fire management action that goes forward, it must contribute to an ecological sustainability. And we also must protect and maintain and enhance all park resources.

Natural resource protection. An example of that, in achieving park resources, could be -- perhaps there's an area of sensitive habitat, right now, that supports a rare butterfly. And that habitat is being encroached upon by shrubs that are crowding out the plants that the butterfly needs. Because there hasn't been a fire in there in so long, the grasslands and the forage that the butterfly depends on are disappearing and being shaded out. So, perhaps,

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prescribed fire in this area could enhance that natural resource.

Cultural resource protection. And example of that would be, would maybe be recreating what historic bunkers looked like when they were first built to protect the coastline. In a lot of cases, vegetation has grown up which would have obscured anybody's view had they been stationed in the bunkers. If we want to develop a true cultural landscape, maybe we'd have to remove certain members of the vegetation that has grown up there in order to give the real feeling of what being at the bunker was

like.

We also want to concentrate on visitor protection. If there's fire roads that are being used as trails that are lined with thick density, thick densities of broom, that won't make a safe evacuation route in case of fire. We want to make sure that our visitors have a safe means to get out of the park.

We're also concerned about our neighbors. Property protection is very important both along the boundaries of the park and within park. We have sensitive historic structures that we want to make sure are not at-risk for fire. We also want to make sure, to the degree that we can, that we can lower

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risk of fire spreading from inside the park into the adjacent residential communities.

Because we're an urban park, we have a fire hazard on many miles of our wildland-urban interface in the three counties where Golden Gate National Recreation Area is sited. I just have a map here that shows the current county, Marin County; but, as you know, Golden Gate National Recreation Area has lands both in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. This Fire Management Plan will address all lands directly administered by the National Park Service throughout our jurisdiction. So that's approximately 35,000

acres of land. I say "approximately," because there's lands that may come to us during the process of this plan that would be included in planning actions. Those lands are in San Mateo County.

A main focus of the revised National Policy that came out in 1998 was an emphasis on the wildland-urban interface. In Marin County, that interface includes your communities of Tam Valley, Homestead Valley, Muir Beach, Stinson Beach, Mill Valley, Marin City. These are all our interface areas. Though there could be, perhaps, an exact measure that's given on the distance from the park boundary, it's really lands that have a contiguous

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open space from the park that put residential areas at a potential risk of fire spread. We're directed by federal policy to concentrate our fire management planning actions on this interface area, where we can, as well as to enhance resources within the park itself.

We also have a long history of catastrophic fire in the Bay Area, and those of you who have been in the area for, you know, the last decade, are very familiar with. The Inverness Fire, which started in state park lands adjacent to Point Reyes in 1995, spread quickly over five days and destroyed 45 homes in the Inverness and Inverness Park area, and damaged

another 12. It burned approximately one-third of the park.

The Oakland Hills Fire, where most of you have either read about or experienced, with 3,000-plus homes destroyed and unfortunate fatalities.

There's another historic fire in Mill Valley, which burned almost, nearly, the downtown area in 1929. A dramatic fire, with 117 homes destroyed.

This process, to develop a Fire Management Plan, is conducted through the NEPA process, the National Environmental Policy Act. So we don't develop the plan first. First, we develop the

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environmental policy that analyzes plan alternatives. That's the stage we're at now. We're just beginning our planning process at this scoping meeting. We've conducted some similar sessions internally with park staff. We're going to conduct other sessions with other fire agencies. So we'll be having special meetings with fire agencies throughout the three counties to hear their concerns, just as we want to hear from the public.

So the first step we're going to do is to construct our environmental document. From that, we'll look at several types of strategies to develop a

Fire Management Plan. We expect to put this together in an Environmental Impact Statement, which would evaluate the potential environmental effects of those alternatives, we hope by July of next year.

The public review period for the that will run, probably, for two to three months. Then, we'll take comments received from the public, look at our document, see if we need to make revisions, and then put out a final plan in which we select an alternative. From that, once that is determined, we've selected out plan, we've refined it, we've developed our guidelines, our protocols, our mitigation, have everything in place, it's signed by

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our Regional Director, we will then release an actual Fire Management Plan that will cover five years of actions.

So this first process is to develop a programmatic plan that is long range, perhaps lasting from 10 to 20 years. From that, we're going to develop a shorter-range, actual implementation plan. If those implementation plans bring up issues that are not covered in the programmatic plan, then they'll have their own review process. But we plan to incorporate community meeting all throughout the process. Any further NEPA program would be available

to the public, as well, and have a similar process as this one.

At this point, I'd like to hand over the Power Point to Paul, and he's going to go through what we've drafted, the goals for the Fire Management Plan, among park staff. This is something that is posted at one of our stations here. These are draft goals, and we'd like for you, as well, to review our goals -- he's going to read them to you -- and give us any comments you might on them. Because we want to be able to reflect your wishes, as well as we can.

So, thanks a lot, and Paul --

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FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN GOALS

PAUL MC LAUGHLIN,

MANAGER, NATURAL RESOURCES

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: We'll briefly go over the draft goals. You were probably given a handout that, on one side, says the wildland fire management, and has all the four questions on it; then, on the back side, it actually has these goals. So, if we go over them and you want to refer to them in detail, there they are in writing for you.

The first goal is to ensure firefighter and public safety. That's our highest priority, and clearly our top goal.

The second is to reduce wildland fire risk.

Now it's interesting, with both natural and cultural resources, and this goal 3, we use fire management, whenever appropriate, to sustain natural resources. So there's the positive side, the beneficial side, of fire and natural resources. And, also, we want to protect natural resources from the effects of fire and fire management activities. So it's sort of a balancing of those two actions.

As a parallel in cultural resources, we want to preserve historic structures, landscapes and archeological resources from the adverse effects of

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fire and fire management activities. And, at the same time, we have opportunities to use fire to rehabilitate and restore cultural resources, particularly cultural landscapes.

As part of our program, we want to continually refine our knowledge of fire and fire management processes, so we're using adaptive management to continually improve our program. So this goal reflects that sense of using research and monitoring to improve our fire management program.

We also want to continue to develop and maintain our staff expertise in fire management.

We also want to make a point of integrating

our fire management program into all the park activities. So it's an integral part of all the activities that we take on in the park, and other activities, and integrate the knowledge we gain from the fire management program and enhancing their program.

Part of -- it's great to have you here tonight. Part of our goal is to foster informed public participation in the fire management activity. Particularly having you come to these meetings and being able to go out in the community and dialogue with all of you is a very important part of that.

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Finally, to foster partnerships and contribute to firefighting efforts, both locally and nationally.

So those are our goals.

Carrie, would you like to over from here.

MS. FEIERABEND: Thank you.

That's a brief overview of what is a Fire Management Plan and the work that's been done to date in support of this Fire Management Plan. As we mentioned, there is a handout that has -- it's double-sided. If you didn't get one, we have plenty of them. They're on both of the side tables, as well as outside. And they have listed on them the goals; but, on the other side, are four key questions that

we'd like to pose to you this evening. Again, you're free to take them home and consider them.

The first one being: What would you like to see the Fire Management Plan accomplish? Are there specific goals, specific alternatives, that you think need to be studied.

Are there specific topics or issues that you think should be addressed in the Fire Management Plan? If you can be as specific as possible, that really helps us figure out how to best address those issues. So, if you know of a particular area that you

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think we should focus in on, tell us about it. Or a specific environmental topic that you think really needs to be evaluated from a fire management perspective, please let us know.

Also, if you think about the future and future conditions, the park in 20 years, and a fire management program, are there specific desired results that you'd like to see? Do you have some ideas on how those results could be accomplished? How could fire management be implemented? We'd like to know what your thoughts are on that issue.

Then, lastly, are there other concerns that we haven't addressed this evening, haven't talked about or brought up, that you think need to be looked

at in the Fire Management Plan.

So those are some prompter questions for you. You may have others that we'll hear tonight. But we want to start getting your input and thoughts and ideas on this subject.

Now, we have set up, here in the room, we have five work stations. And I think what we're going to do is have staff kind of position themselves at the work stations. We were going to have folks rotate around here. I think what we're going to do is have staff give a brief overview of the materials that are

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located at each of this work stations. Then we're going to want to hear from you, and then we'll allow time to circulate and for to provide specific comments and questions, with flip charts and markers, and stuff, at each one of the work stations.

The five stations that we have, and I'll hit No. 6 at the end, one is focused on fire management options and operations. A lot of you may be wondering: Okay. Well, fire management, that's a big title. What's really behind that? What do you actually do to manage fire?

Well, we can learn a little bit about past experiences and talk about future operations and management options. So we'll hear about that.

There's also something, a term,

contemporary term, called the Wildland-Urban Interface that we're going to lean a little more about, which this park really displays.

Then, we touched upon, a little bit already, about the natural resources and the cultural resources, and their interplay with fire.

Lastly, we have the Fire Management Plan Goals, which have been presented this evening. Then, as you're leaving this evening, we have a chart outside in case there are any parting comments that

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you would like to leave us this evening on topic areas that we haven't touched upon.

So, at this point, why don't we raise the lights, get this up, and Alex and Jordan. Why don't you come up. Why don't you talk about fire management options and operations and WUI.

FIRE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS AND OPERATIONS

ALEX NAAR, FIRE MANAGEMENT OFFICER

JORDAN REESER, FIELD MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

MR. NAAR: One thing to think about, in terms of fire operations -- I should introduce myself. I'm Alex Naar, the Fire Management Officer for GGNRA.

MR. RESSER: I'm Jordan Reeser, and I'm the field management specialist, recently assigned here for Golden Gate, as well as Point Reyes. So I'm

actually a shared position working on the field management programs, prescribed fires, as well as mechanical, in both parks. So I'm a shared resource.

MR. NAAR: So one thing to look at is suppression. If a fire starts, what do you, or what do we, collectively, want to do? What kind of response do we want to have to a wildland fire?

Do we want to put it out? Do we want to let it burn in certain areas? If we put it out, how do we put it out? Do we use water? Do we use fire

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retardant chemicals? Are there areas that might be sensitive from a natural resource end of things? For instance: Maybe in Muir Woods, or the Redwood Creek drainage, where chemicals, fire retardant chemicals, might not be appropriate.

Do we want to use heavy equipment? Some of the fires that happened this summer across the country heavy equipment, bulldozers, were used to put in fire lines. Not just small fire lines, but large fire lines. Is that what we want to see happen at Golden Gate?

Jordan, do you want to talk about sort of the proactive end of fire, the pre --

MR. REESER: Indeed. There's suppression and dangers, once a fire has started. The other

option -- or not another option, but our kind of preplanning opportunities are for fuel management activities.

There's basically two types of those: One is the mechanical fuels reduction method; and the other is through the use of prescribed fire. Both of those are studied extensively prior to implementation on the ground. The main areas that are designated for either types of those projects are based on the fuel types that are on the ground, and, primarily, the

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adjacent resources to them.

Prescribed fire doesn't necessarily have a place close to some communities, based on smoke issues, potential for escape. Whereas, some of the areas where we're doing mechanical treatments -- which is going presently in both parks, especially here in Golden Gate, pretty actively -- that those areas have a tendency to be a lot closer to people's residences, and what not.

We have much more control over the fuels that we're removing. We can selectively choose them, as we go, and selectively manage them over a time frame, to obtain those, our predetermined objective, as far as preimposed fuel load levels -- how much fuel is on the ground -- to prevent, basically a preventative measure from fire. Once it reaches that,

quote, unquote, fuel rate, we'll hopefully reduce the intensity and allow us greater containment and confinement opportunities to put it out.

MR. NAAR: I just wanted to add or expand on the two options that Jordan presented: mechanical or using prescribed fire, controlled fire. There might be a couple of other options. One would be to do nothing. The sort of no-action option, to let things do what they will do. The other would be less

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heavy mechanical, what we might call manual, removing smaller statured shrubs, such as broom, by hand, not using power tools.

Then, the sort of fourth or fifth one would also be chemical treatment of vegetation. Which other agencies in California, in our area, use to control vegetation along highways, power lines. There's a whole range of options, and I'd just like people to consider all those.

Do we want to take -- sorry, Jordan? That was my question: Do we take questions or comments at this point?

MS. FEIERABEND: We were going to go ahead and run through each one of the presentations, and then take comments at the end of this. So, if we could hold your comments or questions just right now,

let's finish with each of these presentations and then we'll come back to take those on.

WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE

MR. NAAR: Okay. So, Wendy, I think, touched on what Wildland-Urban Interface Fire is. We, in the business, call it WUI (sounds like woo-ee), the three-letter acronym. It's the area where wildland meets not-wildland. Where it meets a building. It might be in the park, or it might be outside of the

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park.

In our park, we have roughly 50 miles of interface where our property, the National Park Service boundary, abuts human-made developments. We actually don't have a WUI. It's essentially our boundary wherever that might be, in Stinson Beach or Muir Beach, or Tam Valley. It's everywhere. I think most people in this room are, perhaps, familiar with portions of our boundary.

So the one thing that's going on in the interface, in terms of fire, is that we have special funding to do projects to reduce the risk of wildland fire in the interface zone. And that money, it's designed to be used on park lands, and also on non-Park Service lands.

So there's several projects that are happening right now at Point Reyes, and at Golden

Gate, or in Marin, rather -- I should say in southern and middle and west Marin -- that are not on park property. They were projects that were generated and conceived and developed by other agencies, local Southern Marin Fire District, Inverness Fire Department, Muir Beach Fire Department. Each of these communities and agencies came to the Park Service and said: Hey! We want to apply for funding to do these

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wildland fire projects.

So there's Park Service money that actually comes through our park and is used on non-Park Service land to deal with the threat of wildland fire in the interface.

We're trying, as we move forward with the WUI Program, to combine the local and county efforts with our efforts so that, when we do projects, it's one plus one might equal three, if there's more than two. And that is clear in Southern Marin right now, along Highway 1 in Tan Valley, where we're working with Southern Marin Fire and have a project, actually two projects, that are on Park Service and on non-Park Service land. But they're right next to each other.

MS. FEIERABEND: Very good. Thank you.

I should point, since we've been talking about referencing a microphone, that we are this

evening recording the presentations and the comments and the questions that you have so that we can have an accurate record of the discussion this evening. It's one format for us to collect the information and get it in your words. In addition, we can receive it in writing, as we described earlier.

I'd like to ask Paul -- and Sue, are you going to join in on this? -- to give an overview of

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the natural resources perspective on fire management.

NATURAL RESOURCES

PAUL MC LAUGHLIN,

PROGRAM MANAGER, NATURAL RESOURCES

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: We'll keep this brief so that we can get to your comments. We're really interested in those tonight.

My name is Paul McLaughlin. I'm the Natural Resource Program Manager here in the park, and ...

MS. FRITZKE: I'm Sue Fritzke, and I'm the Supervisory Vegetation Ecologist. So I'm in charge of the Vegetation Management Program for the entire park.

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Daunting task.

MS. FRITZKE: Yes, and I'm new. Just got here about two months ago, so still learning.

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: So the main thing I wanted to remind you of was the broad range that's

constituted under the term "natural resources." Now those, of course, are biological resources, things you may think of as vegetation, or wildlife. They can also include wetland -- ecological communities, such as wetlands. And they also include in special status plants and animal species. Often, they have a large bearing on our management actions here. So we're

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interested in your particular comments in that regard.

Natural resources also include the physical environment, including watersheds, soil, water quality, air quality, and even the quality of night lighting and noise, and obviously fire management activities. Fire can have an influence on all of those factors, both potentially beneficial or adverse. So we would really welcome your comments on things we need to be thinking about, desired future conditions, and considerations we should make in making our fire management plan.

Anything else, Sue?

MS. FRITZKE: That's it.

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Excellent.

MS. FEIERABEND: Great. Thank you.

Last, but not least, Paul Scolari will speak to us about the cultural resources perspective.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

PAUL SCOLARI, HISTORIAN

MR. SCOLARI: Thank you, Carrie.

Good evening, everybody. My name is Paul Scolari. I'm an historian, and I am the park's Native American Liaison, as well.

What I wanted to say tonight about cultural resources is, first of all, to explain what we mean

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when we say "cultural resources," especially in the context of the Fire Management Plan.

If you look at -- well, you don't need to look at it. In our goal, we refer to -- our goal for cultural resources, we refer to historic structures. That's a very straightforward category, which includes historic buildings of various types.

We refer to historic landscapes. In the park, we've identified 49, initially 49, historic landscapes. These include military posts, ranches, roads, trails, a great variety of landscapes, with a great variety of features that make up those landscapes.

Then, finally, archeological resources, which are deposits that are either on the surface, or below the surface, that contain the remains of human activity from the past. Sometimes, Native American human activities; sometimes from what we refer to as "the historic period."

So those are the -- that's what we mean when we talk about cultural resources. Our existing data about these resources varies greatly. We have very good data about historic buildings. We know where they are and what they are. We have very poor data on our historic landscapes and on our

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archeological sites. So it will be incumbent on us, as we go forward and implement the Fire Management Plan, to identify whether the features that make up these landscapes are the archeological sites, so that we can then meet our goal of protecting them.

Then, finally, probably, in terms of cultural resources and the Fire Management Plan, the most vital, interesting issue, I think to everybody, has to do with this idea of cultural landscapes. There are -- a major component of an historic landscape is planted vegetation. And what happens over years, as you all probably know, is vegetation spreads. When it spreads, it does two things:

No. 1, it diminishes the qualities that made that landscape important historically, because it expands beyond where it was; and

No. 2, it can become a fire hazard. It encroaches on buildings, and it spreads where you don't want it.

So, in addressing cultural landscapes, or historic landscapes. The Fire Management Plan has the potential of improving those cultural landscapes from an historic perspective, and also improving fire safety in the park and in the Bay Area.

Thank you.

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MS. FEIERABEND: Thank you, Paul.

At this point, now, we'd like to hear from you. And I think we'll stay in a large group, and then we'll have rotating around, so you can take a closer look at this maps. They are a little hard to read from a distance.

As I mentioned, we do have the court reporter here. So, when you do speak, we'd like you to state your name and I think we need you to come up close to this microphone so that we can be sure to record your comments and questions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

STATEMENT OF

MARGARET HELLER

MS. HELLER: My name is Margaret Heller, and I live in Tam Valley. And I hike up there all the time. And I would like to invite all of you, who work in offices, to come up and talk to us, who are out hiking, actually. Because we're here tonight, many of us, not liking to go to meetings at night after work.

You know, I'm listening to the historian and I was thinking that this would be a really wonderful thing, that, if you visited the areas of the park where people are and talk to them about, you know, what their history is with the park, how long

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they've been hiking there, and what they know about it, besides what they think are their concerns about fire safety.

I'm sorry that there are not more people from my neighborhood here tonight. I feel really bad about it because I think that they do care, but they're listening to the debate, or they're just home because it's nice to be home at night.

I have some questions for you. Who starts fires and how do they start? Is it lightning? Is it people? Who are -- are you doing any studies on who, how these -- if we're talking about preventing by clearing vegetation, are we talking about preventing by identifying why fires start? And I'm wondering if there is any statistics on that?

I have about six questions. If you could provide a short response ...

MR. NAAR: Certainly, in the Fire Management Plan planning process, one of the areas we're looking at is the fire history. And just the

quick answer: Typically, before this summer, we had fewer than two lightening strikes in Marin to hit the ground. This summer was an anomaly. There were many lightening strikes that hit in Marin, and elsewhere, and started fires.

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So some of the concerns that I think that Wendy talked about, just to reiterate, were fires, are fires, that may originate outside of the park that will come onto park land, and then move through park property, and either threaten more park actual physical structures, or natural resources, or private property off park property.

MS. HELLER: Is it mostly people, though, that are starting fires?

MR. NAAR: Correct.

MS. HELLER: Well, the reason why I'm asking that has to do with the fact that, sometimes, I feel like, as a hiker up there, I'm discouraged from hiking not by the fire safety department, but other departments of the GGNRA, partially because I'm a dog owner. I've come upon kids up there smoking dope behind rocks, but I'm in an illegal place with my dog, and they're doing an illegal thing. But because I'm there, I stop them.

I kind of would like to ask you to identify, you know, who are the people that might make

the park safer? Not just, you know, who are the people that are going to make it more dangerous? You know, having a lot of kids out there unsupervised is definitely going to make it dangerous. I think we all

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probably agree on that, if we've had children. But if we had more people out there that are encouraged to be out there, that would make it safer and could identify and help out in prevention. I think that's as important as clearing brush out from underneath the eucalyptus trees. That's why I asked that question.

I want to know how bad is the problem here? I mean, I've been here for 21 years, and I hear rumors that Mt. Tam is a fuse and it's about to go, and it's all over. Is that -- do you believe that that's the case? How dangerous is it out here?

MR. NAAR: Not having studied every inch of Mt. Tam, but I do work with other land-management agencies, and most of the fire departments, certainly in Southern Marin, and with the county fire department. There's a general feeling among fire professionals that vegetation fuel buildup -- if you will -- is at a dangerous point throughout the certainly Southern Marin, and Mill Valley-Tam Valley area. And if the conditions are right, typically at this time of the year, in the fall, when we get east

or northeast dry, hot winds -- we've had a few weekends recently that have been, have exhibited that kind of fire weather, that that's when, if a fire starts, it's going to be difficult to contain it in

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short order.

The Vision Fire in 1995, the Oakland Fire in 1991, were examples of exactly that: built-up vegetation, combined with our late fall, dry, northeast or easterly winds, low humidities, our fuels dry out all season long -- we don't get much rain during the summer -- so the potential is there for catastrophe.

MS. HELLER: I remember, 15 years ago, there were controlled burns specifically where I was hiking at that time, which was around Phoenix Lake in San Anselmo. But I haven't seen any controlled burns. Do we not do that anymore? Is that not good fire prevention policy?

MR. NAAR: That's one of the reasons we're going through this fire management planning process: to examine whether, on GGNRA lands, we should be putting fire deliberately on the landscape. Other agencies, indeed, Point Reyes has been using prescribed fire on GGNRA lands north of the Stinson Beach-Bolinas area. They manage our property up

there. So there have been burns. Marin Municipal Water District, State Parks, I think Southern Marin Fire also -- each of those agencies are conducting controlled burns throughout the year in different

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areas.

MS. HELLER: Can I keep going?

MS. FEIERABEND: Yeah, if you would, for the sake others, who may have comments and questions.

MS. HELLER: There's only a few left.

I'm wondering is there a wind department, basically. I mean, in your fire management, are you really exploring this? Because one of my concerns is being at the top of the hill in Tam Junction, and the first part of my hike is through the eucalyptus woods. And I'm confused about how I actually think about whether they should be cleared out because eucalyptus is dangerous and a horrible, you know, fire hazard. But, at the same time, if all those were taken out, if we just went in and took all those trees out without really building up a natural group of trees, the bay trees and oak trees, and whatever, what is it going to do to the wind patterns on my hill? I just want to know if that's being examined, and if that's an issue that you're looking at, along with prevention of fire.

MR. NAAR: Well, it is an issue that we're looking at and it's also now one that's more important

to us because you've brought it to our attention.

MS. HELLER: Thank you. I might have some more questions after everybody else.

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MS. FEIERABEND: Thank you very much.

The woman in the white top.

STATEMENT OF

BETSY DE FRIES

MS. DE FRIES: Hi! My name is Betsy

DeFries. I live on Marin Drive, which is opposite the Miwok Trail. We're right opposite a eucalyptus grove, and we're currently, you know, up to our knees in underbrush up there. There are fallen trees, just general poison oak and leaning trees that have fallen, but haven't come down yet on the road. I would say, in the summer, at least three or four trees come down. Generally in the summer; not generally in the winter, when people think they're going to come down. But I guess, when it's dry out there, they just fall.

I think it's really necessary to clear the underbrush. I don't think anybody would argue about that, whether or not you clear all the trees -- which some of us are in favor of, and many of us are not. You know, I'd love to see them cleared because there is so much mess up there, and have new trees planted,

native trees planted. It was one of the big criticisms that came down when, you know, when you did a certain amount of clearing up there, that trees

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weren't planted right away. I think it's understandable that you can't plant trees always right away. A lot of them were planted elsewhere at the same time.

So, you know, from my point of view, very selfishly, I'd love you to come up and take down those overhanging branches so they don't fall on people -- which they do, quite regularly. Take away those, you know, hanging trees, thin those trees out, clear the underbrush. Maybe even take away some of the smaller trees so they don't become really huge ones. Then begin to plant some of those bays and laurels and things that would survive up there.

It did seem to me, because we've had quite a lot of discussion -- we have a big community group up there in Marin Drive, in that area, where people meet once a quarter. And the talk of native planting has come up a number of times. And I think it's probably worth educating people, because we're right up against the GGNRA, as to what they should plant in their yards that would be good native trees and be able to work, the National Park Service, with the

local nurseries, perhaps, so that we could really be educated as to what would be good things to plant, and perhaps get some, you know, help along that line.

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There's been some confusion up there. Because there is National Park Service land but up against county land, and a little stretch of privately owned land, who is responsible for that? You know, it just seems to me that it would be good to encourage the people, or allow people to get ahold of the privately owned people to get them also to clear, or help them clear it. Because there's no incentive to do it unless they're helped.

You know, I think it's a good idea if we worked together, and not in opposition, which is, you know, the main thing. Like, you know, we don't want the trees cut. We do want the trees cut. I mean, I really do feel like that wastes a lot of time and effort. I think it's really dangerous right now.

I do agree with you that there are a lot of kids up there, you know, doing lots of smoking, in general. And whenever we see them, we do say: Be really careful and make sure you put your cigarettes out and not give them such a hard time about it so they don't throw the stuff. But still, you know, and I'm clearing out brush from along there. I'm always

finding, you know, the Marlboro butt hanging around there. It's terrifying. Because it's really literally up to about here right now.

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So that's all.

MS. FEIERABEND: Thank you for your comments and suggestions.

Anyone else?

MS. HELLER: I would like to ask a question. I mean I have heard that there is going to be some help. I mean someone was saying that that you are going to do some clearing. Is that really helping?

MS. FEIERABEND: I will ask Alex to respond to some of these questions. Let me just preface that, in general, a lot of these questions this evening we're recording so that they can be topics that we answer or address in the plan. We may not have specific answers at this point in time. It tells us that we need to, perhaps, do some data collection, some analysis, and make sure that we address some of these concerns that are being raised in the plan.

MR. NAAR: One thing I just wanted to comment on. Part of our WUI funding, or Wildland-Urban Interface funding for this year -- especially in the Tam Valley area, so this hits the second question, as well -- is not only targeted for

mechanical removal and some of the thinning ideas that you've come up with, dealing with the fuel buildup,

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but also we're funding our nursery program to plant in our nurseries native plants. Which over the course of time, will be, in turn, planted out on the sited where eucalyptus and/or broom are removed.

I think, maybe, the most appropriate use of our time, if there are other comments about the Fire Management Plan, is to talk -- after we break up -- about these specific projects. Because I think there were a couple of people who had questions before we started.

MS. FEIERABEND: Very good. Are there other general comments or questions regarding the Fire Management Plan?

Yes. I will ask you to come forward, please. Be sure to share your name.

STATEMENT OF

JERRY VAN DE BEEK

MR. VAN DE BEEK: My name is Jerry Van De Beek, and I live on the same hill.

What I see happening is that everybody takes out big trees, concentrate on big trees, then they leave. Especially with eucalyptus, they grow about ten feet a year. So nobody is dealing with the

small ones. They become big ones in about two years.
I think it's really good idea to concentrate on the

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small ones because you can take hundreds of those out
a day, and it takes about a week to take a big one
out.

So that's basically my comments. Because,
also, Marin Drive, where the water tower is, I already
seen new trees growing, and they're about already like
that, almost 6-feet high.

MS. FEIERABEND: Thank you very much.

Other folks, comments, questions?

(No response.)

MS. FEIERABEND: Otherwise, what we'll do
at this point in time is break up and allow time for
people to go around to each one of the stations and
have some one-on-one questions with staff. And,
again, we encourage you to write down your questions,
right down your comments. We have flip charts here
that we can record them on. Please pick up, on your
way, the questionnaire that has all of the contact
information and also highlights how you can send us
your information, your comments, your ideas, and to
track the process as we move forward.

So, with that --

MS. POINSOT: And please tell your

neighbors and friends, if you think they'll be interested, to visit the web site and get the

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information on how to comment. We expect to be receiving scoping comments until December --

MS. FEIERABEND: Fifth.

MS. POINSOT: So there's quite a bit of time, yet.

MR. VAN DE BEEK: So, when you get all the comments, finally you're going to answer on the comments. Are we going to be able to answer --

MS. FEIERABEND: That's a very good question, as to what happens with all the comments and question. Wendy, do you want to address that?

MS. POINSOT: What we'll do is -- this helps us define what we're going to look at in our Fire Management Plan. So all the issues that you bring up tonight, we need to consider in the scope of our plan. We also need -- as we're later on going to be developing alternative strategies for implementing the plan -- to listen to your ideas about what we should/should not do and fit all those in into one alternative or another, if it's appropriate.

So the next thing that's going to happen is, at the end of the scoping period, when we receive comments via the mail, in meetings from park staff,

from other agencies, is: We'll compile the comments into a report, a scoping report, that will summarize

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the main issues. We'll have that on line. I don't know if we're going to mail out to a mailing list.

MS. FEIERABEND: That's to be determined.

MS. POINSOT: But it will be available on line. That will be a compilation of all the issues that then feed into this document.

The next thing that happens is we take that, and we're going to start working on alternative strategies. And we'll probably have another set of meetings for the public to get some ideas from you about whether you think we're on the right road with the different alternatives that we've selected so far. So we'll have some draft alternatives for you to look at, comment on, give us some advice.

The next step would be to actually take the final alternative and look at the environmental effect that could occur if we implement those alternatives throughout the park. These are park-wide plans. Your neighborhood and the rest of the extent of the park. And we'll put that out in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement. This is a multi-year process. You comment on that. You come to the meetings, participate. It's all going to be on line. And we'll be putting all the

milestones and dates on line.

Do we have a sign-up sheet for e-mail?

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MS. FEIERABEND: We do, outside.

MS. POINSOT: We'd love to get names for contact. Then you can also let your friends and neighbors know about this contact sheet. So this would be some way that we'll be able to get information out to the group.

MR. VAN DE BEEK: I have just one more question.

MS. POINSOT: Yeah.

MS. FEIERABEND: If you would, please.

STATEMENT OF

JERRY VAN DE BEEK

MR. VAN DE BEEK: I actually know that we don't only have eucalyptus trees growing in the park, but, also, between houses. And people that take those trees away, it cost them about two to four thousand dollars a tree to have them removed. I'm wondering if there's like subsidy for that? If they can get money out of the Park Service to help them pay to remove those trees, or are they totally responsible for those trees? We've got people like who have 10 to 12 trees from their property because they're in danger on their houses in their street. That's thousands and thousands of dollars.

So my question is: Is there any money for

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those people to make it a little easier?

MS. FEIERABEND: Alex, do you want to address that?

MR. NAAR: That fits into the WUI Program. The way that would work, in your example, you would contact your local fire agency -- so that's Southern Marin Fire District -- and work with Mike Stone, who is the fire chief there, and have him, or his staff, come out and look at your trees. If there are other ones that are a priority, then he would submit a project for funding approval. That's the mechanism that's set up.

MR. VAN DE BEEK: Thank you.

MS. FEIERABEND: Great. Thank you.

Again, there's going to be another public meeting on November eighteenth, in the city, at the Park Headquarters, at Fort Mason, that you're all invited to. That information is on the handout, as well.

I'd like to thank you, once again. I think we all thank you, for coming out this evening and participating in this process. Please stay tuned and provide us your comments.

(Whereupon, at 8:10 p.m., the scoping

meeting was adjourned.)).

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the attached
proceedings before the Department of Interior,
National Park Service, of the meeting of:

GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

were held as therein appears, and that this is the
original transcript thereof for the files of the
GGNRA.

James W. Higgins, CVR
Official Reporter